

Prabuddha Bharata

Im 50256-2.

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत



प्राच्य चरानिबोधन ।

Katha Upa, I, iii, 4

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

Vol. XXII]

MAY 1917

[450 No.

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE.)

[VII—Continued from page 63]

After a pause Swamiji spoke again : " Had you not been receiving His grace, why else would you come here at all? Thakur used to say, ' Those who have had the grace of God, well, they cannot but come here. Wherever they might be, whatever they might be doing, they will feel overwhelmed at words or sentiments uttered from here.* Just take your own case,—do you think it is possible without grace of God to have the blessed company of Nag Mahasaya,† a man who rose to spiritual perfection through the strength of divine grace and came to know

fully what this grace really means? अनेक-जन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिं—so it is only by virtue of great religious merit acquired through many births that one comes across a great soul like him. All the characteristics of the highest type of Bhakti, spoken of in the scriptures, have manifested themselves in Nag Mahasaya. It is only in Nag Mahasaya that we actually see fulfilled the widely quoted text, *तृणादपि सुनीचेन*‡. Blessed indeed is your land of East Bengal,—it has been hallowed by the touch of Nag Mahasaya's feet !

* With his egoism perfectly merged in the consciousness of the Mother, the use of the word, ' here ' by Sri Ramakrishna would often stand for the ordinary reference to self. By ' here ' is evidently meant this centre of the Mother's self-revelation.

† Durga Charan Nag, the great saint and perfected soul, living as a householder who wonderfully reflected in his life,—in many of its phases,—the greatness of the Master, Sri Ramakrishna.

While speaking thus, Swamiji rose to pay a visit to the house of the great poet, Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh. Swami Yogananda and the disciple followed him. Reaching Girish Babu's place, Swamiji seated himself and said, " You see G. C., the impulse is constantly coming to my mind to do this and to do that, to scatter broadcast on earth the

‡ " Lowlier far than the lowly stalk of grass."

words of Thakur and so on and so forth. But I pause again to reflect, lest all this gives rise to another sect. So I have to work with a good deal of self-control. Sometime I think, what if a sect does arise. But then again the thought comes,—no, he never himself disturbed anybody's own spiritual outlook; his own outlook was to see the inner sameness. Often do I restrain myself with this thought. Now, what do you say?

Girish Babu— What can I say to this? You are the instrument in his hand. You have to do just whatever he would have you do. I don't trouble myself with all that lot of thinking. What I see is the power of the Lord getting things done by you. I see it with this plain matter-of-fact vision.

Swamiji— But I see, we do things at our own sweet will. And yet in misfortunes and adversities, in times of want and poverty, he leads and guides along the true path with revealing himself to us,—this I am able to see, all the same. But alas, I still fail to comprehend in any way the greatness of his power.

Girish Babu— Yes, he said, "If you

understand it to the full, everything will at once vanish. Who will work then or who will be caused to work?"

After this dialogue, talk on American topics went on; as if Girish Babu deliberately diverted Swamiji's mind to other subjects. When asked the reason for this, Girish Babu told us on another occasion, "I have heard it from the holy lips of Thakur that if through any talk in that strain, Swamiji's mind once rises to the reminiscence of his God-consciousness and of the world's vanity, and hence to the realisation of his own nature, that is to say, to the awareness of what in reality he is, then his embodied state will not endure even for a single moment." So we have noticed that his brother disciples also used to divert his mind to other topics when he would commence talking about Thakur constantly during the day. To return to our narrative, Swamiji waxed very keen on his talk about America and went on describing the wonderful wealth of the country, the virtues and defects of men and women there, their luxury and happiness and so on.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

Ⓔ NE very important text or apothegm of the Vedas is, "स एष नेति नेत्यात्मा"—*Sa esha neti netyātmā*—That Being indeed is the "not-this-not-this" Atman. The whole of religion, it may be said, is contained in this significant utterance fraught with the direct vision of truth in its most comprehensive aspect.

From the very beginning of human history, the human mind soared towards the highest conception of being and different names of God were evolved to signify this highest conception. The effort to resolve this conception into actual experience is religion, and here in this Vedic text, the ultimate illumination

coming as the ultimate result of this effort is being sought to be expressed in words.

But words cannot express this supreme experience, and yet if ever words least concealed the real truth of it, it is in such inspired utterances, terse and tense to the breaking point as it were,—meaningless jargon to many, enigmatic to the learned Pundits, but the saving Mantram to those who sincerely strive beyond the vanities of life.—He whom you seek as your God is the not-this-not-this Atman.

The word Atman denotes that which is the real thing in you and me, in this and that, in

all things and beings,—the reality, the truth, the substance,—that thing which is assumed before any dealing between things or beings is possible,—the fundamental assumption of a self in everything we refer to by a pronoun. Now this great grounding assumption, this self, this Atman, is verily the God that you seek provided you remember one qualification. And the whole process of religion, of spiritual illumination, is embraced within the broad compass of this small qualification.

We apply the idea of selfhood to all objects and persons. We use the word 'itself' of all things, or 'himself' or 'herself' of all persons. And in their uses, the terms self and Atman are quite alike, we may say. So when we qualify the word self or Atman with an expression like 'not-this not-this,' we apparently impose a very definite check on its wide connotative force. For by that qualifying expression we practically exclude from the experience of self or Atman every fact of experience distinguishable as this or that. The experience of self or Atman therefore is an absolutely simple experience, standing and falling by itself, unrelated or unrelatable to any fact of life as we live it in this world. Between the point where we stand now in life and this experience of self or Atman, there is nothing but denials,—not this not this—no affirmation, that is to say, to claim our living the life for it,—to arrest the denying process to which we have to reduce life itself.

Startling statement for many, no doubt. But the truest angle of vision in life shows it to be essentially a denying process. Though on the surface it seems that we live to affirm, we really succeed in affirming nothing. For everything in life is evanescent, and while the processes of affirmation on the one hand keep us on the *qui vive* to achieve, they really and ultimately on the other hand leave us always denying. In fact, if we are to define these processes in the terms of ob-

jective achievement, the best definition of life would be 'a series of denials worked out on endless different lines.' We constantly pass on in life from one self to another; we constantly go in for self-realisation; but no realised self lasts us long and the real under-current of life consists in the denial of one self after another.

But the constant illusion that we essentially affirm in life is the *maya* of it all. The senses and the intellect are fundamentally pledged by their very constitution to affirm things for us. They begin by affirming and maintain a curious system of affirmations, exhaustless in its changes and complications. All our usual denials in life do not affect this system, because they are made to be the cue for other new affirmations. This is how the senses and the intellect bind and enslave us, keeping up the game of *Maya* with our eyes blindfolded by illusive affirmations. Bold must be he who stands up and refuses to be blindfolded, who resolves to see through all the false affirmations of which our life on earth is composed, who sets up in his mind the cry of "not this" "not this" rising to contradict the intellect and the senses as often as they affirm to bind him.

Here is the difference between the false outlook on life and the true one. The false outlook is the outlook of affirmation, requiring us to believe in the reality of things as they are. It says that everything in this God's world is real; any misgiving on that point is foolish. What if all things are on the surface evanescent? Their surface-value by itself may turn out to be zero, but they themselves form the necessary means to lead us to the highest ends of life. Even God is as inseparable from them, as the ends are inseparable from their means, as the substance is inseparable from its shadows, as the reality is inseparable from its symbols. In fact, the subtlest relations between the

world and its God have been 'evolved by the human intellect in order to harmonise a refined sort of worldliness with spirituality. In Vedanta such relations are never regarded as real truths. They are classified as illusions of the intellect admissible only so far as they serve to lead somehow to the real truth, just as it is an error to take the lustre of a jewel as the jewel itself, but yet this error may lead somebody to find out the lost jewel.

But the false outlook on life insists on regarding these relations between God and the world as ultimate truths, simply because they provide a God who is inseparably lumped together with the world of man's fond attachments. The resulting theory of God's immanence in the world becomes the strongest weapon for discrediting the old monkish renunciation, and the life of the world receives all the support of philosophy and poetry. If you want to affirm God, affirm first the world as it presents itself to your senses and the intellect. Seek the immanent God in the things He inheres, and so never let go your intellectual hold on these things. Yes, you may deny the gross for the sake of the subtle, but deny not beyond the intellect, the life of thought and sentiment,—lest you fall headlong into the inanity of abstraction.

The dictum, *sa esha neti netyātmā*, alters the whole of the outlook described above. Religion begins, it declares, where you reach beyond the intellect, for religion begins with the perception, the awareness, of Atman, the very Beyond of all time, space and causation, of all things intellectual. And this awareness of the Beyond is something which stands apart from the workings of the intellect and the senses. It stands as an experience, a fact, against which the whole life in the world appears like the wonderland of Alice in the story, a drama under the stage-managing of time, space and causation, where any role may be played with wonderful richness of

relative attitudes. But a dreamland is a dreamland for all that, and there is no other way back to wakefulness except we know that it is all dream. It is for this knowing of the dream as dream that we must needs start the process of 'not this' 'not this' in religion. For directly you accept in your soul anything of the dream, directly you compromise, the dream-film moves on and on, and you are overpowered by its reality.

This non-acceptance of dream as real life forms the very core of spirituality. By virtue of the intellect and the senses, man cannot but affirm, by virtue of man's spirituality, he denies. This constant play of affirmation and denial is the psychology of the great spiritual mind. By affirming to deny, he lives not the life as we know it, but lives the beyond of life. And this beyond is not a mere term in the relation between itself and the life we live. True, the intellect knows no absolute identity or absolute contradiction. Its denials are affirmations in a deeper sense and *vice versa*. But the "neti neti" of Vedanta is not the mere intellectual denial. It is not the denial of any terms of the intellect, affirmed in the very act in a subtler relation. It is the denial of the intellect itself in some superconsciousness which is neither the intellectual yea nor the intellectual nay. This beyond of intellect cannot be related by any intellectual act to the world of intellect. When the one is, the other is not, when the other is, the former is not. And when once the Beyond has existed for you or me, the existence of the world of intellect becomes unsubstantial against the brooding sense of super-conscious reality.

The whole yarn of dream, then, leaves its thread ends in our possession. And at the dissolving of the dream our whole being, and not the mere intellect, withdraws with "neti neti." Both the affirmations of thought and the attachments of sentiment—as also the

pursuits of end through means—melt away in a strain of consciousness which from our side of the fact can only be described as "neti neti." Who will define what this great withdrawal from dream is in itself? One prophet has called it Jnanā or knowledge, another has called it Prema or love and yet another the final return of the coiled cosmic energy in man—the Kundalini. But there are blooming theorists now-a-days who vociferate that the withdrawal, the "neti neti" of renunciation, is only a half-truth, an abstract antithesis, the supreme synthesis being the Bliss divine which holds all things and enjoying selves the whole play and the playmates, in its unfolding, infinite significance. Yes, the thought of Bliss is some bliss no doubt, and it may create experiences other than those of this earth. But while such bliss may combine nicely with the wine of the great dream, the real Bliss is too all-absorbing to admit any the slightest dream of relative

consciousness. One's own capacity is no measure of truth.

"*Neti neti*," the keynote of denial is the keynote of the truly spiritual life. You do somehow utter this 'neti neti' somewhere in your everyday conduct of life if you are a spiritual man, no matter what theory of spirituality you may be brandishing in the face of your opponents. Man must needs seek his 'neti neti' Atman; his Gods prove this necessity; his Loves indicate this bold dash in the direction. The great wonder is how he is overmastered right and left by the affirming trick, the Maya. But in the dreaminess of it, even the gods nod, what wonder men will snore. Here the great call of "arise and awake" is the only direct call, and "neti neti" the only prayer on the bead. And the plainest religion ever preached on earth is *sa esha neti netyātmā*.

THE BIRTH OF HUMANITY.

HUMANITY is still a mere idea, not yet a fact. Humanity has not yet been born. We argue, we write, we rhyme with the word. We swear by it, we appeal in its name. It has risen above the horizon of our thought, like the sun by its parallax. But it has not yet come to exist as a self-evident power to be reckoned with, as a factor to determine circumstances of human life, as a concrete entity asserting itself unfailingly in the social or national conduct and outlook of men.

And the truth of the above statements has been amply borne out by the present war. From start to climax what the war exposes is the utter importance of humanity as an idea and what it proves is the keen necessity of its birth as a fact. In a deeper sense, it

may be said that the war is the travail of that birth. Humanity must take its birth. By rending asunder the veil of obstructions, it must burst forth into existence. And the great phenomenon is taking place before our eyes.

Humanity, the idea, came into the world long ago no doubt. No small credit is due for the popularisation of the idea to Auguste Comte, the prophet of humanity in Europe. But in fact, the great labourers in the highest fields of thought had always meant the fruits of their labour to go to man *qua* man. They spoke before an audience of humanity that was in the making. The Rishi who addressed men as the children of Bliss, a Socrates or an Archimedes, has no limited vision of race, clime or age. They lived and worked for the

Humanity which they felt within themselves as a fact, but which in fact has long long been struggling to the birth.

Such a big idea as that of humanity must take long ages to body itself forth as a fact. The ascent from individual life has to take place from stage to stage. Men have to group themselves together into larger and larger formations in order that the range of their being, the scope of their doing, may expand. And all along the course of such steady expansion, strong conflicting forces which make for narrowness create an endless series of crises. One such great crisis has come in the shape of the present war.

Nationalism dawned upon Europe as a great power for expansion, for the exaltation of individual a family life to the undreamt-of glories and achievements of a larger life in the nation. But this very nationalism became jealous of farther expansion and developed a new type of collective selfishness tremendous in its potential fury. The appeal to the idea of humanity had already been in vogue, so the empty argument was kept up. But the nationalism which had once saved man from the narrowness of a family self perverted itself to a nationalism with a new order of lust, self-conceit and anger to inspire it. Nationality that was to be the stepping-stone to humanity sold itself away to the old enemies of man, and these waxing exceedingly strong with the stupendous strength of man's magnified life in the nation, set themselves during modern ages to brew behind the scene the greatest disruptive catastrophe that can be hurled against the evolving humanity on earth.

This nationalism of lust, anger and self-conceit must die in the millions of deaths with which the fair face of earth is sicklied over to-day. It must spend itself up with the mountain-loads of powder and explosive that converge towards the battlefields as a pageant of how and where the vast anger

of nations acting on their vast covetousness ultimately lead. This great disruptive force, this nationalism so long regnant in Europe,—whose cloven feet have been exposed at last in spite of loud, canting professions of allegiance to humanity,—this great imposter, who, like the demoness Putanā after Sri Krishna's birth, has been playing treacherously the role of a wet-nurse to humanity,—aye, this nationalism of anger, lust and self-conceit must die.

For humanity must have to be a living fact. It must begin to assert its unity above the diversities of race and clime, creed and custom. And this self-assertion of humanity as the culmination of all nationalistic processes must have definite, well-organised vehicles for the expression of its will and authority. The ascendancy of humanity over nations must no longer remain a mere principle in the theory of life but come out in all its necessary implications as the highest factor in the practice of life. The nations would consider it on one hand their clearest self-interest to bow their heads low before this authority of humanity, on the other hand the very compulsion to do so would be the very corner-stone of their own state-organizations.

This expansion of man's being as from a life in the nation to a life in humanity has naturally to proceed along the different lines of human interest. What is that conception of man's life and its interests which humanity must needs accept as the very principle and purpose of its unity? The modern tendency of culture in the West is to take the pursuit of all the earthly means of life as life itself. Life, it practically says, consists in providing oneself with the various accumulating means of life, physical and intellectual. It is these means of life which have been characterised in the scriptures as the riches and the treasures of the earth, for they are corruptible. They are unstable and they endanger covet-

ousness in man and foment animosities. They comprise such possessions of man as breed inequalities and antagonisms. The tendency of things in life which we enjoy, physically or intellectually, is to create jealousies, competitions and hostilities. To build the unity of man on such things is to build on shifting sands. In history we find their pursuit uniting men into nations to divide humanity into rival, jealous nationalities. So for lasting bonds of unity which will avail us equally in all stages of human expansion, within nationhood as well as humanity, we have to go to what the human experience of centuries has distinguished as things spiritual. For things temporal appeal to those forces in human nature which divide one man from another, while things spiritual appeal to deeper forces which identify man with man.

So in that conception of human life which cannot but triumph with the birth of humanity, the governing pursuits of man must be spiritual. Man's spiritual interests must determine and evaluate the various pursuits of life's means. But are these spiritual interests of men on earth, along the line of which their ultimate unity must seek its lasting fulfilment,—are they themselves common? Do these higher interests of man really provide any common ground of unity? Is man's religion or man's God one?

We have seen, the question is important. Humanity is a spiritual unity; and we have seen, it cannot but be so. To make the unity temporal is an impossibility. One humanity through the pursuit of temporal things has been the fond hope, the favourite assumption of men. But the internationalism of temporal powers and authorities has already proved a huge house of cards, and diplomacy cannot erect any other. So the internationalism, the procedure that will lead us of different countries towards the lasting realisation of humanity cannot be essentially political, or based on temporal things and powers.

This true internationalism must be the reflection in mutual conduct and dealings of the fundamental belief in one God, one religion and consequently one humanity, which Sri Ramakrishna came to teach and embody on earth.

So far as any documentary evidence of the remotest antiquity of man has been made available by researches, the story of the very first migrations of human civilisation as culled from the Vedas appears relevant to the important question we are considering. The earliest Vedic worships evidently formed the seminary from which primitive conceptions of God and religion were transplanted in lands that radiated civilisation to the whole world. This transplantation or migration was necessitated, among other causes, by disparity in the dieties worshipped, and the Iranian schism gained overwhelming prominence simply because the wrench coming after a longer connection was felt more deeply home. Primitive man became divided with the division of his gods. Modern man has to reunite on the basis of the unity of his God and religion. In the earliest age, man was sent abroad with his distinct gods to travel along his distinct lines of worldly achievement. The present century expects to see man returning to his primal unity enriched with the experience of ages and grounded firm on the unity of God and religion.

So the coming birth of humanity is really a re-birth, the re-incarnation of the universal man of one God and one religion using the unstable means of life for the sake of the life beyond birth and death. And the creed of this universal man has been preached in India just before the present great war in the leading of all. In the very lives of the great preachers, Sri Ramakrishna and his apostle, the birth of Humanity announced itself, and the barriers of false nationalism must tumble down in powder fumes and human blood to make room for the throne of Humanity.



THE HYMN OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S ARATRIK.*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

(Translated from his Bengali.)

TRANSLATION.

खण्डनभवबन्धन जगवन्दन वन्दि तोमाय
निरञ्जन नररूपधर निर्गुण गुणामय । १

मोचन-अघदूषण जगभूषण चिद्धनकाय
ज्ञानाञ्जन-विमलनयन वीक्षणो मोह याय । २

भास्वर भावसागर चिर-उन्मद-प्रेमपाथार
भक्ताञ्जन-युगलचरण तारण-भव-पार । ३

जृम्भित-युग-ईश्वर जगदीश्वर योगसहाय
निरोधन-समाहित मन निरखि तव कृपाय । ४

भञ्जनतुःखगञ्जन करुणाधन कर्मकठोर
प्राणार्पण-जगततारण कृन्तनकलिडोर । ५

वञ्चन-काम-काञ्चन अतिनिन्दित-इन्द्रियराग
त्यागीश्वर हे नरवर देह पदे अनुराग । ६

निर्भय गतसंशय हृदिनिश्चय-मानसवान्
निस्कारण-भक्त-शरण त्यजि जातिकुलमान । ७

सम्पद तव श्रीपद भवगोष्पदवारि यथाय
प्रेमार्पण समदर्शन जगजनतुःख याय । ८

नमो नमो प्रभु वाक्यमनातीत

मनोवचनैकाधार

ज्योतिर ज्योति उज्ज्वल हृदिकन्दर

तुमि तमभञ्जनहार । ९

धे धे लङ्ग रङ्ग भङ्ग वाजे अङ्ग सङ्ग मृदङ्ग
गाइछे छन्द भक्तवृन्द आरति तोमार । १०

* "Aratrik" literally means "religious service held at night." But it generally stands for a special service which consists mainly in moving lights and other adjuncts of worship before the image. At the Maths of the Sri Ramakrishna Order this service, held generally after evening, is concluded with the following hymn of *aratrik* composed by Swami Vivekananda. This worship of the founder of an Order is traditional in all Maths.

We worship thee, Oh the adored one of the world, thou who annulest the bondage of the round of birth and death, who camest in human form though pure beyond any taint, and wast beyond the *gunas*† and yet had all good attributes.

Oh thou, with a body which is pure thought tense and thickening, thou the glory of the universe, the redeemer from all impurities of sin, to see whose eyes resplendent with the collyrium of wisdom is to have the great spiritual disillusionment of one's life.

The Ocean of deep emotions, all aglow with Light, the vasty deep of love whose sway is always fathomless to reason, thou ferriest man across the waters of transmigratory existence and thy twin feet are the treasures which the devoted only earn.

Thou the revealed Divinity of the age, the Lord of creation and man's helpmate in the path of Yoga, by whose grace we experience the losing of the mind in the Peace Beatific.

Thou who quellest the scowlings of life's griefs, the all-compassion yet the stern hero in action, laying down thy life for redeeming the world,—thou who cuttest asunder the chains of *kali*, the evil spirit of modern materialism.

Lust and lucre foiled for ever by thee, attachment to sense decried. Oh the foremost of men, the prince among heroes of renunciation, grant us devotion for thy feet.

Beyond all fear and doubts all gone, of firm, adamant mind, thou art the refuge of those that seek after thee, unconditioned in thy offer and making no distinction of caste, rank or fame.

Self-surrender to thee ‡ is our supreme means, before which the whole universe of transmigratory being is like the hollow left by the cow's foot! While thou givest thy love to all seeing the Sameness in all, the sorrows of men on earth depart.

Salutations now to thee, Oh Lord, thou beyond mind and speech and yet with all speech and mind contained in thee,—the Light supreme of all light, illuming the caves of heart, thou art the glory stretched forth to chase away all darkness of the human lot. With the *mridanga* (the holy drum) with all its accompaniments, discourses, enthralling music, thy devotees sing to thee the measured song, thy *Aratrik*.

† The *Gunas* are the threefold *primum mobile* of creation, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.

‡ Or, literally rendered "Thy holy feet constitute our Supreme means."

EPISTLES OF
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

CXV.

(Translated from Bengali.)

Victory to God.

Gazipur,
8th March, 1890.

Dear Sir,

Your note duly reached me, and so I too shall be off to Prayag. Please write to inform where you mean to put up while there.

Yours

Vivekananda.

P. S. In case A— reaches at your place in a day or two, I shall be much obliged if you start him on his way to Calcutta.

Vivekananda.

CXVI.

(Translated from Bengali.)

Gazipur,
31st March 1890.

Dear Sir,

I haven't been here for the last few days and am again going away to-day. I have asked brother G— to come here, and if he comes, we go over to you together. For some special reasons, I shall stay in secret away in some village some distance off from this place, and there's no facility for writing any letter from that place, owing to which I could not reply to your letter so long. Brother G— is very likely to come, otherwise the reply to my note would have reached. Brother A— is putting up with Priya Doctor at Benares. Another of my brother had been with me, but has left for A—'s place. His news of arrival is not yet received and his health being bad, I am rather very anxious for his sake. I have behaved very much cruelly towards him,—that is I have harassed him much to have him leave my company. There's no help, you see; I am so very weak-hearted, so much overmastered by the distractions of

love! Bless me, that I may harden. What shall I say to you about the condition of my mind! Oh, it is as if the hell-fire is burning there day and night! Nothing, nothing could I do yet! And this life seems muddled away in vain; I feel fully helpless what to do! The Babaji throws out honied words and keeps me from leaving. Ah, what shall I say. I am committing hundreds of crimes against you,—please excuse them as so many misdoings of a man driven mad with mental agonies. A— is suffering from blood dycentery. I shall be very much obliged if you kindly enquire of his condition and send him down to our Math in case he wants to go there with our brother who has reached from here. My *Gurubhais* must be thinking me very cruel and selfish. Oh, what can I do? Who will see deep down into my mind? Who will know how much I am suffering day and night? Bless me that I may have the most unflinching patience and perseverance. With countless greetings

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

P. S. A— is staying in Priya Doctor's house at Sonarpura. The state of my back-ache is as before.

Vivekananda.

CXVII.

(Translated from Bengali.)

[Probably written from Gazipur during the first week of April, 1890.]

Dear Sir.

Where shall I get that renunciation you speak of in your advice to me. It's for the sake of that very thing that I am out a tramp through the earth. If ever I get this true renunciation, I shall let you know; and if you get anything of the kind, please remember me as a partner thereof.

Yours

Vivekananda.

CXVIII.

(*Translated from Bengali*)

Baranagore,
10th May, 1890

Victory to Ramakrishna !

Dear Sir,

I could not write you because of various distractions and a relapse into fever. Glad to learn from A—'s letter that you are doing well. G— has arrived at Benares probably by this time. King Death happens here to be casting into his jaws these days many of our friends and own people, hence I am very taken up. Perhaps no letter for me has come there from Nepal. I know not how and when Vishwanath (the Lord of Kashi) would choose to vouchsafe some rest to me. Directly the hot weather relaxes a little I am off from this place, but I am still at a loss where to go. Do please pray for me to Vishwanath that He may grant me strength. You are a devotee, and I beseech you with the Lord's words coming to my mind, "Those who are the devoted ones to my devotees, they indeed are considered the best of my devotees."

Yours etc.

Vivekananda.

PROF. GEDDES AND THE SUMMER CONFERENCE SCHEME

Prof. Patrick Geddes is a well-known name all throughout India among educated people. He has distinguished himself not only by his expert knowledge in town-planning but also by his profound learning in all subjects connected with the betterment of human life on earth and his selfless devotion to that cause. It is not very rarely that wise men from the West have come to India ; but perhaps no Western Magi ever came to India before with such a sincere respect for her ancient culture combined with the throbbing heart of a well-wisher having no axe of his own to grind.

The material life of the people in India stands now in its lowest ebb. The imposition from above of a new intellectual and economical life since the advent of the British power in India has created a wide gulf between the intelligence of the country and its active limb, the proletariat. What with this terrible rift in the old life of the country and the exasperated impotence of the mere new ideas flowing in from the Western life, the whole of India presents a sorry spectacle of practical stalemate and theoretical confusion. And no country has any justification for lapsing into all this disorganisation in this modern age when men all over the world are feverishly keen on making the utmost of the fair earth given to them by God. So India pulled to pieces on all sides has to suffer to-day from the chronic want of food, the most fundamental want of a living being.

"Feed India" was therefore the most touching appeal; the most moving cry, that was uttered off and on from the bleeding heart of Swami Vivekananda, India's hero in the days of darkness. "Feed India" is still the most solemn whisper that comes wafted into the very depths of our soul when we turn our hearts towards the service of our country. And "Feed India" is the only word that expresses best and in the smallest compass the most essential need of India, which provided, she has nothing else of earth earthly to care or live for. For India has learned from the earliest times to live on the least to live for the highest.

So the central problem for us is to feed India, and the problem is as difficult to solve as it is easy to state. For what makes the soil yield our daily food is not manual labour only but intelligence as well. The production of food in India has been, as we have said, divorced from all the intelligence of the country which in its turn has suffered grievously in its very backbone of practicality. The whole problem resolves itself therefore to that of leading this intelligence back to the plough of the farmer, to the loom of the weaver, to all the tools with which the modest life of the people in India feeds, clothes and equips itself. All the science that this life requires for its modest pursuits in the villages must reach down to the farmers and craftsmen through their enlightened neighbours in the villages, and the problem is to create this enlightened neighbourhood of rural India.

But as the currents of life flow to-day, centres of activity and initiative have to start amongst townsmen first, and then with the universal watchword of "back to the villages," educated men must spread out from their baneful exile in towns towards the villages where their India still lives. Before their burning spirit of service, before their self-conscious enthusiasm for that spiritual scheme of national life which India only has so long been living to fulfil in this world, the narrowness of village life will disappear, and science and patriotism will save and reorganise to-day what religion has been patiently building up for scores of centuries and what religion will carry again to its noble fruition.

No study of this collective life and its problems can be expected to be more fruitful than that made by our educated countrymen with such a towering representative of Western science and culture as Prof. Patrick Geddes. Surely we can hope for the best if to the spiritual impulse, which the old organic scheme of Indian life has received during the last few decades, are added now the versatility of his thought and his scientific insight.

It is therefore with great pleasure that we reproduce below the whole scheme which Prof. Geddes with some of his friends has formulated for a course of intelligent study and investigation of the Indian life and its needs. We hope, from such small beginnings, fuller and richer opportunities for study and practical work will gradually open up in future.

Darjeeling Summer Meeting 1917.

(Mon. 21st May—Sat. 16th June.)

Following the example of American and European Vacation Meetings or Conferences, it is proposed to hold at Darjeeling, from May 21st to June 16th, a Summer meeting with the following aims:—

To bring together in the comparative leisure and freedom of Darjeeling different members of the community—Indian and European, official and non-official, women as well as men,—for lectures and informal discussions on matters of social and biological science; and this with reference to the Problem and Needs of India, industrial and artistic,

agricultural, sanitary and economic, civic and educational.

COMMITTEE.

Dr. P. N. Banerji.	*Mrs. Geddes.
*Mrs. P. Banerji.	Mr. Moti Lal Ghosh.
The Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu.	Mr. W. R. Gourlay.
Sir J. C. Bose.	Sir. K. G. Gupta.
*Lady Bose.	Mr. J. H. Lindsay.
*Mr. Ramananda Chatterji	*Prof. S. C. Mahalanobis.
Hon. Justice A. Chaudhury.	*Prof. P. Mahalanobis.
*Mrs. A. N. Chaudhury.	Prof. P. C. Roy.
*Mr. P. Chaudhuri.	Hon. Dr. Nilratan Sarkar.
*Dr. B. L. Chaudhuri.	*Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal.
Prince Victor of Cooch Behar.	Mr. B. Sen.
*Brahmachari Ganendranath.	*Swami Saradananda.
Prof. Geddes.	Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore.
	Swami Turiyananda.
	Hon Justice Sir John Woodroffe.

* Members of Executive Committee.

Prof. Geddes and others will give a series of lectures and demonstrations on sociology and civics, in relation especially to Indian villages and towns; and on Biology with reference to surrounding forms of life.

Sir J. C. Bose, Mr. P. Chaudhuri, Sir Rabindra Nath Tagore and others will also give lectures, and open discussions, on questions of current educational, scientific or other advance.

The lecturers are giving their services without fee; but expenses have to be met. In addition therefore to fee for membership (Rs. 10; half fee for teachers and students) a Guarantee Fund is being raised.

Intending members or subscribers are requested to communicate as soon as possible with any of the following:—

HONORARY SECRETARIES

Mrs. P. Banerji, 46 Jhautala Road, Balligunge, Calcutta.

Mrs. Geddes, C/o Thomas Cook & Sons, Calcutta.

OR WITH THE HONORARY TREASURER

Brahmachari Ganendranath, 1 Mukherji Lane, Bagh Bazar, Calcutta.

Darjeeling Summer Meeting, 1917.

Mon. May 21st to Sat. June 16th.

During the past generation Summer Meetings and Conferences have become increasingly frequent, not only in universities, but also in holiday resorts. As the promoters of the earliest of these Meetings in Europe—those of Edinburgh since 1887—are for the present summer in India, it is proposed to utilise their experience and initiative in the organisation of a Summer Meeting at Darjeeling.

The lectures, demonstrations and excursions will deal with various aspects of Social and Biological Science and with reference to Problems and Needs of India, industrial and artistic, hygienic and educational, social and ethical. Workers in these different fields of thought and action have too rarely the opportunity of meeting and of knowing each other's needs and aims. The meeting will serve to widen interest in these various points of view, and thus help towards common action.

In the comparative leisure and freedom of Darjeeling, and with its moderate distances, it is easy to bring together different members of the community, Indian and European, official and non-official, women as well as men, for lectures, demonstrations and discussions, for outdoor studies, for musical, dramatic and other social functions. The prime purposes of visitors to Darjeeling, those of recreation and invigoration, must not be forgotten, but rather sought more fully, for mind and body.

It will be asked, how can any such quest of ideas be given definiteness enough to justify its month of activity? Various methods have been reached in such Summer Schools. The first and most appropriate is that of attention to the immediate environment, by the survey of Darjeeling and its Region, in its many aspects—its natural beauty and sublimity, its geography, geology and metrology, its botany, forestry, and zoology, its anthropology and village life, with its modern town life and problems also. In observation and interpretation of these, interest develops in natural and in social sciences alike, and in bringing together their distinctive points of view.

The saying "Many men, many minds" is in this way illustrated; yet in course of such a survey main streams of thought and tendency appear. The modern conflict of ideas becomes more intelligible, and the co-operation of good wills more hopeful.

The urgent Survey is thus not merely of Darjeeling; it is a far more general stock-taking, that of the ideas and ideals now in conflict and in transition over the world. Among these what can we select, and what best apply in the opening future—here in India?

COURSES OF CIVICS AND BIOLOGY.

The following syllabuses indicate the general treatment, and parallelism, of the two main courses, of Civics and Biology, to be conducted by Prof. Geddes, with co-operation from other lecturers.

In this parallelism will be seen to lie a two-fold thesis and this for East and West alike:—(1) that the needed renewal of Education—with reunion of its dispersed endeavours and re-organisation of its insufficient methods—lies in and through the corresponding renewal of Citizenship; in which (2) the political, economic and other divergences and conflicts of the present may also be progressively harmonised.

All studies and surveys, whether naturalistic or humanistic, thus lead to, and realise themselves in Social Service; while effective service demands active and continued Survey. Action and thought, City and University, thus progressively interact, in and towards fuller Life—and that of Society and its Members, mutually advancing in their evolution.

SOCIAL STUDIES AT DARJEELING.

First

I.—Village Study. (8 a.m.) May

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|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. The Region and its Outlooks | ... Mon. |
| 2. Excursion | ... Tues. |
| 3. The Region and its Occupations | ... Wed. |
| 4. The Village (a) in Development (b) | |
| in Deterioration | ... Thur. |
| 5. From Village to Town | ... Fri. |
| 6. Village Survey (Excursion) | ... Sat. |

Second Week*II.—Town Study and Treatment.* May 28—**LIFE IN CHANGE; AND THEORIES OF EVOLUTION.**

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|-----|--|-----------|
| 7. | Town Survey (Excursion) ... | ... Mon. |
| 8. | Problems of Darjeeling ... | ... Tues. |
| 9. | Possibilities of Darjeeling ... | ... Wed. |
| 10. | Indian Towns and Town Planning ... | ... Thur. |
| 11. | Great Cities of India ... | ... Fri. |
| 12. | Darjeeling as Village, Town and City (Excursion) ... | ... Sat. |

Third**CITIES IN CHANGE; AND IDEAS IN CONFLICT.****June**

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|-----|---|-----------|
| 13. | "Western Civilisation" as Industrial age; Ideas of this ... | ... Mon. |
| 14. | Critical and Revolutionary Movements ... | ... Tues. |
| 15. | Solutions in Progress ... | ... Wed. |
| 16. | The War as a Conflict of Ideas ... | ... Thur. |
| 17. | Reconstruction after War (Cities and Universities) ... | ... Fri. |
| 18. | Excursions and Discussions ... | ... Sat. |

Fourth*Social Ideals in Evolution.***June**

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|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| 19. | Exhibition of Ideas ... | ... Mon. |
| 20. | The Essential Progress ... | ... Tues. |
| 21. | Through Determinism to Freedom ... | ... Wed. |
| 22. | The City's Evils and Burdens ... | ... Thur. |
| 23. | Possibilities of City and Citizen ... | ... Fri. |
| 24. | Excursion and Discussion ... | ... Sat. |

Week**NATURE STUDIES AT DARJEELING.****21-26 (5 p. m.) I.—Nature Study.**

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|-----|----|-----------------------------------|
| ... | 1. | Nature Study and its Outlooks. |
| ... | 2. | Excursion. |
| ... | 3. | The Web of Nature. |
| ... | 4. | Nature in Contrasted Aspects. |
| ... | 5. | Nature in Growth and Integration. |
| ... | 6. | Nature Survey (Excursion). |

Week**June 2. II.—Life Study and Treatment.**

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|-----|-----|---|
| ... | 7. | Botanical Survey (Excursion). |
| ... | 8. | Problems of Life and Death (Sir J.C. Bose). |
| ... | 9. | Experimental Control of Life (Do.) |
| ... | 10. | The Life of Tanks. |
| ... | 11. | Agriculture in India. |
| ... | 12. | Forestry (Excursion). |

Week*Ideals of Life in Evolution.***11-16.**

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|-----|-----|--|
| ... | 19. | The Curve of Life. |
| ... | 20. | Through Mechanism to Vitalism. |
| ... | 21. | Psychic Education. |
| ... | 22. | Life's Evils and Diseases. |
| ... | 23. | Possibilities of Individual Development. |
| ... | 24. | Excursion and Discussion. |

At the close of each lecture, opportunity will be given for questions and discussion.

On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 3-30 p. m. to 5 (and oftner if desired) informal discussions will be held in the common room of the meeting, to which all are invited. Afternoon tea can be arranged for.

Other lectures, demonstrations, and excursions, also evening meetings &c., will be announced as arranged for.

If found desirable, the hours indicated for lecture-courses may be modified, by vote of audience, at the close of the opening lectures.

The best preparation for the courses of this meeting will be found in observation, reflection and discussion, upon the lines of its programme.

Co-operation in the various lines of work is also invited.

No books are prescribed; but a bookcase and reading table will be provided, on which lecturers and members generally, may place books &c., of relevant interest.

All communications should be addressed to one or other of the Honorary Secretaries or the Honorary Treasurer.

CORRESPONDENCE.

VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN LOS ANGELES.

Los Angeles, Cal.

Feb. 16th 1917.

Dear Prabuddha Bharata,

You have come to us so regularly for so many years, we feel we are writing an old friend.

Would you like to hear something of the Vedanta movement in Los Angeles? We are sending a brief sketch of the work here, both present and past.

Swami Abhedananda is with us again, this being his third winter here lecturing and teaching.

February first the Swami conducted a wonderfully inspiring birthday service in memory of Swami Vivekananda. A beautiful picture taken here was placed upon an altar and was framed and banked about with flowers. Swami Abhedananda opened the service with chanting and meditation and then spoke very sweetly and lovingly of his spiritual brother whose life and work meant so much to both East and West. He told of their boyhood life together, how they had studied and chanted together, travelled together and together sat at the feet of their great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and of how the inspiration of that wonderful life had fitted them for their own life work. Several speakers followed students who had met Swami Vivekananda here and in other parts of the United States. Swami Abhedananda closed the service with meditation upon the character of Swami Vivekananda; upon his great power of self-sacrifice, always sacrificing himself to the utmost for the help of others—upon his chastity and his purity which gave him his great power and upon his great love for humanity, which made humanity pause and listen to his message. After the closing meditation the offered fruit and flowers were passed among the audience.

Although Death and change have been busy here as elsewhere, there were in attendance a number of the old students, who, seventeen years ago, under the inspiration of Swami Vivekananda's presence organised the Society, the first time.

In July of the same year (1900), Swami Turiyananda came here from New York. He met all the members here, as well as those of the Pasadena branch of the Society and although he remained

but two weeks, he made an impression upon the lives of some, which will never leave them and all felt the spiritual power of that great soul; but the work in San Francisco called him and except for two later visits of a few weeks each the Northern centre had the benefit of his two years work in California.

During the twelve years of splendid work Swami Trigunatita did here he made four visits in Los Angeles. In 1903 he came first, giving two months to lecture and classes. In 1904 he returned for two months and in 1911 he made two visits here, but found Los Angeles too distant to keep proper supervision over the work. So while students continued the study in their own homes it was thought best to discontinue the public work until such time as we could have a competent spiritual leader. That opportunity came when in December 1914 Swami Abhedananda came here in response to the invitation from some of his former students of Brooklyn, New York, who are now living in Long Beach, near Los Angeles where a branch centre has been established under the direction of Swami Abhedananda. When it was learned that Swami Abhedananda was willing to establish permanent headquarters here, Swami Vivekananda's old students and friends as well as many new, rejoiced in the opportunity for the study and practice of pure Vedanta under a competent guide. Swami Vivekananda used to ask "Why drink ditch water when the pure stream of Vedanta is flowing by?"

Do you know that the Gospels and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna as given forth by his disciples, are now studied in every State and Territory of our Nation? The quotation below is from a letter from Swami Abhedananda to one of the workers here.

"It fills my heart with extreme joy when I think how our Lord Sri Ramakrishna is silently installing Himself in the heart of this materialistic and commercial country. His ways are inscrutable. All glory be to Him! The other day I saw Him. How happy He looks! How childlike is His expression! We are, as you say, mere instruments in His hands. Whatever He wishes He makes us do. That is all. My constant prayer to Him is "O, Lord, Let Thy will be done, not mine." "Whatever is mine is Thine, O, Lord."

With best wishes for the continued helpfulness

and prosperity of the magazine.

We are sincerely Yours,

Los Angeles students and friends.

Swami Abhedananda gave a course of popular lectures at the Ebell Clubhouse in Los Angeles. We give below a few extracts from his speeches :

DIVINE MOTHERHOOD.

"The worship of God as mother is unknown to the West, but the Hindus from prehistoric times have worshipped the 'eternal creative energy' immanent in nature as the 'divine mother,' or 'lord of the universe.'

"Theologians and priests of Christendom preach the 'fatherhood of God,' thus giving prominence and power to the male principle of nature.

"Although the writers of Genesis represent the Creator as masculine, they could not deny the presence of the female element which helped the Creator in bringing life into existence.

"But the more we comprehend God as immanent in nature the more clearly we understand God as our mother as well as our father."

HOW TO GAIN SELF-MASTERY ?

"What does it mean to be a master ? Is it to be a ruler, a king, an emperor ? Emperor and king over what ? Over other people ; over certain territory, certain portions of the earth's surface and the inhabitants thereof ? No, that is not the definition of mastery. To gain self-mastery means to gain control over our own lower nature ; to be able to assert the divine birth-right of the soul by rising above nature and her laws. This state of the soul in Sanskrit is called Mukti or Freedom.

"We do not need wealth, nor even a healthy body, to attain freedom, but we need to know that we are not the body, but the body is our slave, our instrument, and must do our will. In fact, not only the body but all matter is subject to the command of the soul that has gained self-mastery, or God-consciousness, as this state may be called. But we must understand that God-consciousness means more than the pronounciation of the words.

"Will nature obey empty words ? The soul that can command obedience from nature has left in it no selfishness, no impurity ; it no longer thinks of itself as a limited human being, but knows itself one with the Cosmic Mind. Its own will is merged with the Will Universal, that moves all people and all things.

"To attain to this state is the real object of human life. The object of this life is not to run after amusements, little enjoyments or comforts of the body ; nor to gain wealth or fame nor worldly kingdoms, however great these may for the moment appear, but the object of life is freedom, self-mastery, knowledge.

"Knowledge is power. The knowledge we seek is of whence we came, of whither we are going, of what and who we now are in reality.

"This knowledge is of our divine self, the master in us. How shall we attain this state ? There are many methods. In India the attainment of masterhood is thought to be the most important thing in life, beside which every other interest pales. There the best methods of attainment have been taught since the Vedic period."

SECRET OF SUCCESS.

"This world is a gigantic stage upon which the kaleidoscopic panorama of human activities are going on ceaselessly from prehistoric times down to the present day. Every individual man is playing the part of the role of the drama of human life. Some are showing signs of failure in their efforts, while others are shining like brilliant stars and are gaining the laurels of success at every step.

"What is the cause of this anomaly ? Why should one fail and another succeed ? The reason," Swami Abhedananda said, "is simply psychological. Failure is bound to come to those whose minds are not under control, whose attention is not properly concentrated, whose thoughts and ideas are not methodical, whose power of discrimination is dull, and will power weak.

"The mental energy of such people is scattered and naturally their efforts bring poor results in action on the physical plane. On the contrary, those who are successful in business and other undertakings possess self-control and their minds are well-trained for concentrated attention, their thoughts and ideas are so regulated as to understand the subjects they try to master. They possess keen power of discrimination and choose the right method at the psychological moment and converging the scattered energy of their whole being they strike on one point with tremendous force, which removes all obstacles and brings victory over competitors and their efforts are crowned with the laurels of success."

PREF-EXISTENCE AND IMMORTALITY.

"One of the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy is the immortality of the soul, and this immortality is not the reward of merit or of an ethical life or faith in the Christ, but is the nature of the soul itself. According to Vedanta there never was a time when the soul did not exist and it can never cease to be.

"The doctrine taught in Christianity of a special creation of the soul at the time of the birth of the body is not based upon a rational foundation. It is not supported by any fact in nature.

"Scientific thinkers know that anything that has a beginning in time must have an end in time. Therefore, no theory of immortality can be perfect or complete without admitting the preexistence of the soul.

"The preexistence of the soul can be proven by the awakening of the memory of the past lives. All our past experiences are stored in the sub-conscious mind or subliminal self, and by practice can be brought to the conscious plane.

"Thus, in Vedanta we learn that immortality includes an eternal past as well as an eternal future."

EVOLUTION AND RELIGION.

"The theory of evolution has demolished the structure of super-naturalism and miracles and has established the unity of nature and the uniformity of natural laws.

"We now know that this universe is infinite and unbounded in extent; it is empty in no part, but is everywhere filled with substance, however, attenuated that substance may be.

"The facts of evolution have opened our eyes to the truth that creation is not a special act having a beginning 6000 years ago, but we learn that the soul is the creator and the soul's creation is like its own nature—beginningless, endless and eternal.

"As early as 700 years before the birth of Christ India had given the world a religion explaining the origin and evolution of the phenomenal universe in accordance with the truths that have since been discovered as modern scientific fact.

"Sir Monier-Williams has said the Hindus were Spinozites more than 2000 years before the birth of Spinoza, Darwinians many centuries before the birth of Darwin and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution was known to the modern world."

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE DACCA RAMKRISHNA MISSION

On the 4th of March, 1917, the Annual General Meeting for the seventeenth year of the Ramkrishna Mission, Dacca Branch, was held in the local Mission premises with about three thousand men and eight hundred ladies present on the occasion. Mr. S. G. Hart, District Magistrate, Dacca, was in the chair. After an opening song, the yearly report was read by the Secretary, after which Mr. Evan. E. Biss, special officer in charge of the Dacca University Scheme was asked to speak by the chairman. The following is the full text of his speech:—

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak here for the second time at an annual meeting of the Mission. Last year we met on the same spot and around us were the foundations of the various buildings which have since been completed. It is a very great event in the history of the Mission then to find itself accommodated in buildings which though not yet fully developed are in themselves almost complete. I think the Mission is to be congratulated very heartily upon its progress in all directions. Its hospital has made a distinct advance. Some of us thought that its distance from the thickest part of the population of the town might hinder its usefulness but it is becoming more and more known and patients are coming to it, so that the difficulty appears to be disappearing. It is found very useful specially by the population of villages outside of Dacca to come to it in considerable numbers.

The school which had a very small beginning has also made considerable progress. I believe, some 55 to 60 children are now in the school and there is great promise for the future. I hope there is someone within the sound of my voice this evening who will come forward within the next month, at any rate, and put down the money that is required for the building. If one of you cannot do it, I hope several will join together to do this good work.

Then, the Temple and the Monastery are also

showing progress. I noticed the other day that a beautiful marble floor and a marble base for the shrine have been laid within the temple. I feel it is of the greatest importance if you are going to have a shrine here, that you should show that you are willing to give your best in that direction. It is, therefore, a very great pleasure to me to see that beautiful floor which has been put there. But if the members of the Mission will allow me, I will venture on a little warning in this connection. I feel very strongly that the success of this Mission is largely due to a group of young men who for the several years consecutively met regularly for devotional purposes, unknown to the public and developed amongst themselves a certain spiritual power. The result of that quiet, unobtrusive, devotional development has resulted in the saving from sickness of large numbers, the education of a number of children and many other benefits to humanity, or to some part of humanity; but there is some danger that as you gain success you may be inclined to devote too much attention to externals. I, therefore, would beg the members of the Mission to continue to devote themselves to quiet, unobtrusive, devotional work amongst themselves (applause). When I last visited the Mission I was told that it was the desire of the workers to substitute a marble image of artistic merit for the photographs of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa which are now in the sanctuary. This again, I say, may be all right. But I thought after I had left the temple "what would be the view of this that would liken by the master himself if he were to come and visit your shrine?" I could not help thinking from the little I have read and learnt of him, that it is very possible that had he stepped into your shrine he would very gently, perhaps, have taken his photograph away and put in its place a sick and suffering child. He might have been inclined to say to you, "It is here in the sick and suffering child that you will see the revelation of God to which you must devote your all." I would say by way of further illustration of my point that if you are given a telescope you might look at it and say that it is a very beautiful object. Its brass shines like gold—its workmanship is most perfect—you might turn it from side to side and extend it to its full length and say that it is a magnificent teles-

cope. But would it reveal to you the greatness of the infinite starry universe? No, not used only so. If you want to get the good of that telescope you must put one end to your eye and the other end towards the stars. Then you will see that the telescope is a means of revelation and so it is with prophets and seers who come amongst men on earth. They must be admired no doubt for thus we learn their greatness—we love them for their goodness and for their devotion, but we must not use them only to admire in this way. As they themselves must have desired, we should use them as a means of revelation of God to ourselves. I, therefore, repeat the exhortation, I have ventured upon, that you should keep in touch with the Eternal Power, and should not become too much concerned with that external and ceremonial side of religion which is always a danger, and the power which each of you is sure thus to develop should be used by each individual to make the world better by one man. Each of us can do so. We may not be able to do very much for suffering humanity as a whole, but each one of us can make the world better by just one man, that is, himself and that by serving others.

Now I should like to speak to you this afternoon upon only one other point and I seize this opportunity because I see here a large number of people who are not connected with the Mission who may be asking a question which has been asked many times within the last year, "Is this Ramkrishna Mission a dangerous body, to be avoided, or is it something which we may feel free to support?" I know that that question has gone round and round in Dacca, and it is one that needs answering. His Excellency the Governor of Bengal made a public speech some time ago in which he referred to this Mission by name. I will venture with our President's permission just to quote a few sentences from his speech. In speaking of anarchism in Bengal he said, "The recruiters of the anarchists in attaining their end use terrorism as well as persuasion, and I will feel certain, I am sorry to say, that they often seize the opportunity which membership in a charitable society like the Ramkrishna Mission—a participation in the relief of distress—gives them to meet and to influence boys who have noble ideas, but which have not enough experience to judge where a particular course must

lead. I have the highest respect for the Ramkrishna Mission and for societies like it. I know of nothing more worthy of encouragement than the social service which these societies exist to promote and there is nothing in India which I deplore more deeply.....than the fact that mean and cruel men do join these societies in order to corrupt the minds of young men....." His Excellency went on, "You can do no better service to your countrymen than by trying to prevent these societies being used by those who are doing such infinite harm not only to Bengal but to all India..."

I emphasise these words of His Excellency's for I feel that senior men amongst us who are standing aside from the young of the Ramkrishna Mission because certain of its members have fallen under suspicion and committing an act which has reached the point where prudence becomes merged in cowardice.

I feel that men should come forward to maintain and help what is good in the Ramkrishna Mission and then there will be more chance from the Mission people themselves to stamp out evils as soon as they arise.

I close then by repeating His Excellency's words once more :—"I have the highest respect for the Ramkrishna Mission."

Mr. Evan E. Biss was followed by other eminent speakers among whom the names of Mr. R.K. Das, Bar-at-Law and Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen, M.A. D.L., Vice-principal, Dacca Law College are prominent. The concluding speech of the chairman of the meeting was full of suggestions and appreciation. We hope to summarise the Report of the Dacca Branch for the readers of the 'Prabuddha Bharata' after it is printed and circulated.

The text of the President's speech :—

The presence of so many visitors is a testimony to the good work of the Dacca Branch of the Ramkrishna Mission and a tribute of admiration for the self-denial shown by members to benefit the poor, the afflicted and the uneducated.

As we are told in the report 'the work of the Mission is threefold: Religious, Educational and Charitable. Concerning the religious side it is not appropriate that I should say anything at this meeting. The educational work includes help to poor students in providing them with stipends, free-studentship, free boarding or free books. But

the main effort is concentrated on the maintenance of a free school. This school, I understand, has recently been remodelled on the lines of a High School. That is to say its training from the lowest to the highest class is planned as a preparation for the matriculation examination of the University. Now there is much uncertainty in the minds of many people as to what should be the object aimed at in school education. Those who have spent much thought about the matter will still find difficulty in giving a definite answer to this question. This we might certainly say that the object of education is not to pass an examination, to obtain a specified percentage of marks in written replies to printed questions; for after passing the examination the successful student still has to pass the test of life. Whether he emerges from that test with credit or discredit depends mainly on his character. I think then we may fairly say that the object to be kept before us in education is the formation of character. So far as I have been able to gather this is the principle underlying the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda. It is therefore with some misgivings that I find the Ramakrishna Free School adopting the curriculum of a High School, for very few of the students will be able and probably even fewer have the bent of mind adapted for a University Career. But at the same time, I believe, the curriculum is not the most important point about a school. Even with a good curriculum we can have bad teaching and there may be excellent teaching with the most unsuitable curriculum. What does matter is the living spirit infused by the teachers into the scholars and to this we trust the fullest attention will be given. Knowing the fervour with which the members of this Mission are inspired, our trust has sure foundation. To us who are visitors here to-day the philanthropic part of the Mission work makes the greatest appeal. I refer to the work which might be called purely charitable, though in no part of the work of the Dacca Ramkrishna Mission is there any trace of self-seeking or profit-making (cheers). Everything is done for the benefit of others. The poor are relieved, the sick nursed and given medical treatment, missing children restored to their parents, infirm pilgrims and travellers helped, and all this is done in that spirit of self-sacrifice which pervades the

charitable work of the Mission. But no less remarkable is the organisation itself. The excellent organisation of relief work carried out at the Nangalbund Snan and at the Jannastami procession has caused many hundreds of people to invoke blessings on the heads of the workers of the Mission.

Such good organisation could not be obtained without discipline and the mighty events of the great war have impressed upon us all that the two things which the community requires from the individual are self-sacrifice and discipline (hear hear). We admire the Ramkrishna Mission because it has the faculty of instilling these two virtues in a very high degree into the minds of its members.

The scrupulous and methodical care with which the accounts are kept in another matter which calls for especial commendation. Such work is tedious and irksome, but it is absolutely necessary in order to secure the utmost possible result from the means available, and not only to prevent waste or improper use of the funds of the Institution but to make it impossible for any accusation ever to be made which would sully the fair reputation of the Mission.

I am grateful to the President, the Secretary and the members of the Mission for the opportunity given me of presiding in this pleasant meeting to-day.

I congratulate you on your success in obtaining the buildings you required and I wish you god-speed in your work of brotherly service.

NEWS AND MISCELLANIES.

SWAMI Paramananda, the President of the Vedanta Centre, Boston, U. S. A., has opened a new permanent centre in Los Angeles, Cal. and is giving a course of lectures and holding classes at the new home of the Vedanta Centre. The Vedanta teachings have proved very popular in Los Angeles and the lectures are always being well-attended.

SWAMI Abhedananda, who has established permanent headquarters in Los Angeles, has passed 18 years in Europe and America and during that

time he has lectured in London, Berlin and Paris. In this country he has lectured before the faculties of the leading universities in the East as well as at Berkeley.

The Vedanta societies which he has established in the East and in the West maintain correspondence with all parts of the country.

The Swami has received many letters from soldiers in the trenches since the beginning of the war, regarding his teachings and the lectures which he has given in different parts of the world.

—*Evening Express*, Los Angeles.

A correspondent from Dacca writes:

Information was received at the local Rk. Mission on the evening of the 2nd April that a serious cholera epidemic had swept away a number of lives at Dhirasram a village near Joydevpur District Dacca. A party of eleven workers, all of whom were well-trained in nursing, went to the affected village on the 3rd with medicines and necessary appliances. 61 deaths were recorded in the Death Register within a fortnight before the arrival of the workers and the terrible panic was beyond imagination. There was not a house in the village in which deaths had not occurred, and most of them died practically without any treatment. The epidemic had almost subsided when the workers arrived, and they took up 20 cases, out of which 12 were of serious type. The workers did all in their power and rendered medical aid and nursing to the diseased. There were only 3 deaths and 17 came round. The workers came back on the 7th April, when there was no more cases of cholera in the locality.

THE Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama at Kan-khal reports that during the months of February and March 1917, there were in its indoor department 7 old and 21 newly admitted cases of which 19 were discharged cured, 2 left treatment and 4 still under treatment. In the outdoor department there were 3548 entries in the register, of which 1867 were repeated numbers of old cases and 1681 new cases. The accounts of the month show Rs. 427-11-9 to be the total receipts, the total expenditure during the month is Rs. 916-1-3. We are glad to learn that two rooms of the proposed general ward have been subscribed to. Now the

Sevashrama fervently appeals for contribution to the building fund for erecting another room which will complete the proposed ward, and we hope the appeal will not be made in vain.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMKRISHNA HOME OF SERVICE, SILCHAR, 1916. The idea of organising a Sevashrama at Silchar was first conceived by Swami Bhumanandaji of Belur Math who went there with the noble object of alleviating the distress of flood-stricken people of the district of Cachar; the young men of the town showed much enthusiasm and it was practically realised in September 1915. Besides giving relief to the diseased, poor and the needy, the Home of Service has opened one Vivekananda Night School for imparting free education to the so-called depressed classes.

We are glad to receive the Second Report of the Sevashrama at Lucknow. During the period under report 28 families and 18 individuals were maintained by the Sevashrama. In addition to this *atta*, rice etc., were distributed to the poor and helpless persons. An outdoor dispensary is attached to the Sevashrama where medicines and diet are supplied free to poor and deserving patients. A weekly class on Thursdays is held for the study of the Shastras. It is gratifying to note that a school has been opened in the Sevashrama under the supervision of Prof. S. N. Roy, M. Sc., of the Canning College with the object of giving free primary education to those who could not afford to join the existing educational institutions.

THE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA SADHANALAYA (Charitable Homeopathic Dispensary), Baje Sibpur, Howrah, is to hand. The number of patients treated during the year ending with the 31st December 1916 increased to 1,000 against 250 in last year. We wish steady growth and success to the institution.

We have received the Seventh Annual Report 1916, of the Sri Ramakrishna Samaj, Cuddapah. The Samaj has under its management a Free Reading Room, a Free Library and a Free Night School for labourers, chiefly for depressed classes. The School had on its rolls at the end of December last 41 students of which 2 were girls.

The Annual Report of the Charitable Dispensary of the Ramakrishna Math, Belur, Howrah for the year 1916. During the year, the Dispensary evidently made a good progress, as the number of prescriptions served during the year was 10470 as against 7314 in 1915. This increase of about 40 p. c. is attended with a corresponding increase in the number of patients treated, which was 2900 during the year. The patients were drawn from all castes and creeds, from Hindus as well as Mahomedans. No distinction is observed in helping them with medicines or diet.

FROM the report of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban, we learn that altogether 43 indoor patients and 3100 outdoor patients have been treated during the month of March 1917. The subscriptions and donations during the month amounted to Rs. 94-3-0, the total expenditure being Rs. 677-0-9.

IN connection with the weekly series of Vedanta lectures of the Calcutta Vivekananda Society, Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Pramatha Nath Tarkabhushan delivered a very learned and interesting lecture on the "Vedanta and the Buddhistic philosophy." The speaker traced how gradually the Vedic religion became degraded at the hands of the priests; how they lost sight of the real purpose of worship and sacrifices—viz., the attainment of Jnana, and devoted most of their energy and time in the pursuit of the almost useless minor details of those ceremonies. Then came the great Buddha. Here the lecturer spoke a few words about the renunciation and severe austerities of the prince Siddhartha to find out a new path of salvation and thus remove the causes of misery from the world. After attaining Nirvan himself the Lord Buddha preached and popularised the means of attaining the same, all over India. He was also helped in his noble mission by a large number of monastic followers or Bhikshus whom he organised into order or *Sangha*. The distinctive feature of the Hindu Sannyasa was the realisation of self-knowledge; while the Buddhistic phase of monasticism was to help others to attain salvation along with self-improvement. The meeting lasted for nearly two hours.